

BELIEVE VILLA HAS AGAIN ESCAPED TRAP— NO FURTHER REPORTS OF BATTLE

El Paso, March 21. — Lieut. Thos. S. Bowen seriously injured "somewhere in Mexico" when aeroplane fell to ground while Bowen was on scouting duty for Pershing's expedition.

Columbus, N. M., March 21.—Believed Villa has escaped Carranza and American pursuing columns. Since Carranza forces were reported to have engaged him near Namiquipa, no official word has come from battlefield. American forces reported closing in on Villa also unheard from here.

Authentic advices indicated possibility that bandits engaged just east of Namiquipa were part of Villa's 500 men recently reported in vicinity of Bachiniva and San Geronimo, Chihuahua. Villa himself believed in another part of Guerrero mountain though his exact whereabouts apparently was unknown to officials in Juarez and El Paso.

Considerable apprehension felt over announcement in Juarez that communication with points near Namiquipa over Mexican Northwestern line had been cut. Before trace of Villa was lost it was learned that instead of disbanding his followers he was recruiting troops in districts he traversed. Suspicion also resulted from presence of large bodies of Carranzistas between Pershing's command and border.

San Antonio, March 21. — So hot has become pursuit of Francisco Villa through mountains south of El Valle that Gen. Pershing apparently has left behind his wireless equipment and dispensed with reports to headquarters here. Gen. Funston today was absolutely without word either from Casas Grandes or El Valle. Not even customary "strength report" nor routine reports from the quartermaster's department had been received. Army officers believe

this can only mean that Gen. Pershing has found himself so close to fleeing bandit that everything has been subordinated to active pursuit. Interest here is intense.

El Paso, March 21.—U. S. cavalry under Col. Geo. Dodd early today were reported on forced marches from Cruces toward Namiquipa to reinforce Carranza troops under Col. Cano, engaged in fierce running fight with Villa bandits.

Encircled by Carranza and American forces, Villa was making desperate efforts to reach Santa Clara canyon in the Guerrero mountains, 20 miles each of Namiquipa. Absence of news from the battlefield since Juarez officials late yesterday received first words of Villa brought at bay, led to fears that he has cut his way through armed ring and was temporarily safe.

To trap Villa if he escapes the central column from Cruces, Gen. Pershing has sent cavalry squadrons southward to Babicora ranch and to Carmen, on either side of Namiquipa.

One of these three columns should be within striking distance of Villa's rear guard with 24 or 36 hours.

Several aeroplanes with the expedition spent last night on Mexican soil near Ascension. They were within a few hours' flight of Namiquipa battlefield and may possibly be of assistance to American reinforcements in locating bandit's followers.

Gen. Gavra, Carranza's commandant at Juarez, pointed to battle at Namiquipa in denial of reports that Carranza troops are disposed to let Villa get away and give him an equal chance with American army on his trail.

Carranza consul intimated U. S. expedition has established base near Casas Grandes. Reports that Carranza garrison there had been withdrawn to Juarez to avoid friction remained unconfirmed.